

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BRIDGETOWN 1837

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, BB
SUBJECT: OPPOSITON DLP HOLDS SEAT IN BYELECTION

REF: BRIDGETOWN 1749

1. SUMMARY. THE DEMOCRATIC LABOUR PARTY (DLP) HELD THE ST. MICHAEL SOUTH CENTRAL SEAT IN MODERATE VOTING JULY 6 AS 42-YEAR OLD MEDICAL DOCTOR RICHIE HAYNES OUTPOLLED HIS BARBADOS LABOUR PARTY OPPONENT BY ALMOST A TWO-TO-ONE MARGIN. MOST POLITICAL AND MEDIA OBSERVERS NOTED THAT THE RESULT SHOWED A CONCERN OF VOTERS TO MAINTAIN A STRONG TWO-PARTY SYSTEM, BUT EVEN PRIME MINISTER TOM ADAMS ADMITTED THAT THE RULING PARTY FACED SOME UNPOPULARITY BECAUSE ITS ECONOMIC POLICIES HAVE INVOLVED A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF BELT-TIGHTENING. THE RESULT LEAVES THE PARLIAMENTARY BALANCE AT BLP 17 AND DLP 7, BUT THRUSTS THE ENERGETIC AND INTELLIGENT HAYNES INTO THE POLITICAL SPOTLIGHT WHERE HE IS EXPECTED TO, IN THE WORDS OF A PARTY COLLEAGUE, RUTHLESSLY ATTACK WHEREEVER THERE IS A GOVERNMENT WEAKNESS. END SUMMARY.

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2. 42-YEAR OLD HEART SPECIALIST, DR. RICHIE HAYNES RODE THE WELL-ORGANIZED DLP CAMPAIGN MACHINERY TO AN EASY VICTORY IN THE ST. MICHAEL SOUTH CENTRAL BYELSCITION JULY 6. HAYNES POLLED 2604 VOTES TO 1367 FOR BLP CANDIDATE CHARLIE HINDS AND A MERE 51 VOTES FOR INDEPENDENT CARL HADDOCK. DLP STALWARTS CAMERON

TUDOR AND BRANFORD TAITT WERE THE BRAINS BEHIND THE CAMPAIGN THAT PRODUCED AN INTELLIGENT, CONTROLLED AND CONCERNED HAYNES - IN CONTRAST TO 1976 WHEN HAYNES, WAS DEFEATED BECAUSE OF HIS IMAGE AS A RICH PLAYBOY.

3. HAYNES TOLD NEWSMEN AS THE RESULTS WERE ANNOUNCED THAT THE VICTORY WAS ONE FOR THE DLP, SHOWED THE CONCERN OF VOTERS FOR A VIABLE TWO-PARTY SYSTEM AND WAS A MESSAGE FOR THE RULING BLP THAT ITS ECONOMIC POLICIES SINCE 1976 HAVE BEEN TOO RESTRICTIVE ON THE LOWER AND MIDDLE CLASSES OF BARBADOS. HAYNES SERVED NOTICE THAT HE WOULD BE HEARD ON ECONOMIC AND OTHER ISSUES WHEN HE TAKES HIS SEAT IN OPPOSITION.

4. DEFEATED CANDIDATE HINDS AND PRIME MINISTER TOM ADAMS AGREED THAT VOTERS HAD OPTED FOR A HEALTHY AND STRONG OPPOSITION GIVEN THE 17 PARLIAMENTARY SEATS ALREADY HELD BY THE RULING BLP. THE DLP RETAINS ITS 7 SEATS IN OPPOSITION. ADAMS ALSO AGREED THAT SOME ECONOMIC MEASURES INSTITUTED BY HIS GOVERNMENT SINCE 1976 - INCLUDING CURBS ON SOME IMPORTS, A SPECIAL LEVY ON BUSINESS TO STIMULATE EMPLOYMENT, AND A GENERAL TIGHTENING OF CREDIT - HAD CONTRIBUTED TO UNPOPULARITY OF THE GOVERNMENT AT THIS TIME.

5. LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION ERROL BARROW COMMENTED THAT
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THE ELECTION RESULTS SIGNED A REVERSAL OF THE TREND TOWARD THE BLP THAT BROUGHT THE ADAMS GOVERNMENT TO POWER IN 1976 AND HE SAID HE WAS SURE THAT ADAMS HAD GOTTEN THAT MESSAGE. BARROW SEEMED TO PROTEST A LITTLE TOO MUCH, HOWEVER, WHEN HE DENIED THAT HAYNES WAS ONE OF HIS PERSONAL PROTEGES OR WAS BEING GROOMED AS A FUTURE DLP AND POSSIBLY BARBADIAN LEADER.

6. FORMER DLP PARLIAMENTARIAN AND MINISTER FREDERICK SMITH, WHOSE RESIGNATION IN APRIL TOUCHED OFF THE BYELECTION CAMPAIGN, TOLD AND EMBOFF ON ELECTION EVE THAT HAYNES WOULD BRING BRILLIANCE, EFFECTIVENESS AND ENERGY TO THE OPPOSITION IN PARLIAMENT. BUT SMITH WARNED THAT HAYNES HAD A STREAK OF RUTHLESSNESS THAT WOULD PROBABLY CAUSE HIM SOME PROBLEMS IN THE POLITICAL MARKETPLACE. SMITH ALSO CONFIRMED THAT A HAYNES VICTORY WOULD BRING THE RESIGNATION OF DLP M.P. REYNOLD WEEKES WITHIN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS SINCE THE DLP WOULD BE CONFIDENT OF ITS ABILITY TO HOLD SEATS IT HAS TRADITIONALLY HELD. WEEKES, WHO WILL BE 64 LATER THIS MONTH, IS KNOWN TO BE IN POOR HEALTH AND ACTUALLY ATTEMPTED TO BOW OUT OF POLITICS IN 1976 BEFORE WINNING THE ST. PHILIP SOUTH

SEAT HE HAS HELD SINCE 1961 FOR THE FOURTH TIME.

7. THE GREATEST EFFECT OF THE BYELECTION VICTORY IS THE ARRIVAL OF HAYNES ON THE ACTIVE POLITICAL SCENE. HAVING GAINED THE RESPECT OF THE BARBADIAN COMMUNITY FOR HIS INTELLECTUAL AND PROFESSIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS SOME YEARS AGO, HAYNES AT LAST HAS THE OPPORTUNITY AND A REASON TO THINK THROUGH MORE SERIOUSLY HIS STANDS ON VARIOUS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ISSUES THAT TO NOW HAVE BEEN VAGUE AND DISJOINTED. AS A NEW PUBLIC FACE FOR THE DLP HE ALSO HAS THE OPPORTUNITY TO HELP REVITALIZE THE OPPOSITION PARTY. THE VOTERS APPARENTLY AGREED THAT THE RULING BLP NEEDED A MORE SERIOUS AND ORGANIZED CHALLENGE TO ITS LEADERSHIP.
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IF HAYNES IS ABLE TO CONTRIBUTE IN THAT DIRECTION, HE WILL HAVE FURTHERED NOT ONLY HIS GREATER POLITICAL FORTUNE, BUT ALSO THE REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY OF A TWO-PARTY SYSTEM.
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